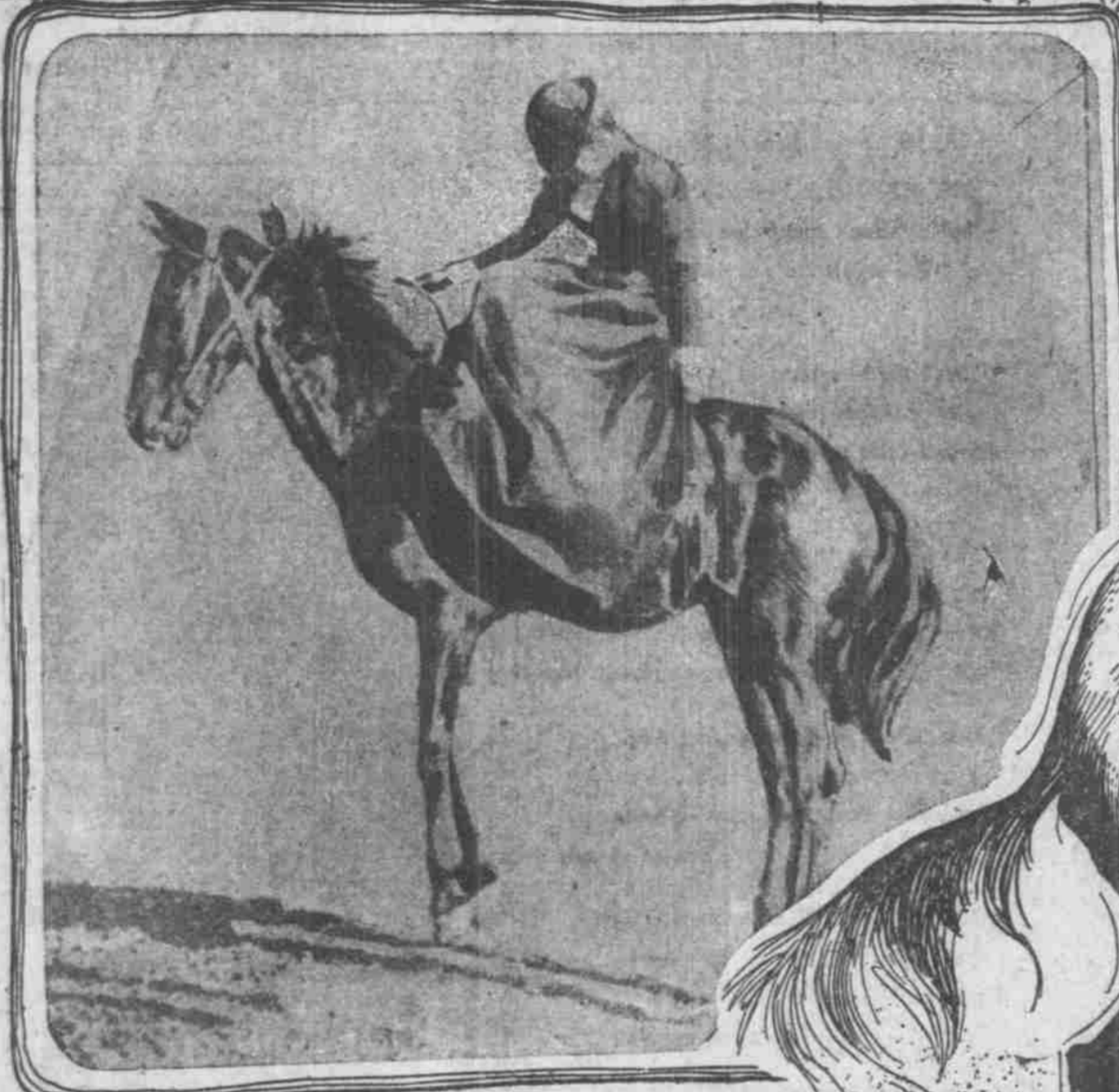




BUSTS BRONCOS FOR A LIVING.

STRENUOUS VOCATION OF AN OREGON WOMAN WHO CAN ROPE A HORSE, OR BUNCH OF STEERS WITH THE

ROUND UP A HARDEST 'COW PUNCHER.'



WOMEN have filled the avocations of men to such an extent that there is hardly a calling or profession that has not its feminine contingent. But it is safe to say that there are not many who live the strenuous life that Mrs. Minnie Thorpe Austen has led since her girlhood. She is a cowboy in petticoats, with the daring and nerve of the pioneer of the plains.

With the passing of the "wild and woolly West," extinction is threatened of the American cowboy. Nowhere in the world can be found his prototype; he is alone and occupies a unique position in the world of men. Remington has pictured him a wide-brimmed sombrero, with clanking spurs, his lariat coiled at his saddle pommel and a brace of six-shooters swung carelessly at his belt, ready for anything from a cattle stampede to the frolic of "shooting up" some frontier town. Roosevelt and other writers have limned his characteristics and traits, with aptly turned sentences and descriptive sketches that supply the information that the drawings intimate but do not express in words. He is a rollicking, roystering son of the plains, and fears neither God, man nor devil. But what of the feminine type in the same calling?

Ah, here's the surprise. In a modest home in Woodlawn lives a little woman, still young and attractive, but with the dignity and seriousness that comes with motherhood, who can ride with the hardest cowboy of the plains. Bucking horses are to her what the gently rocked cradle is to a fretful infant, yet she can do the little things that are essentially feminine with all the grace that is inherent in her sex. It is a far cry from roping a steer to heaving a pan of light biscuits, but in either of those occupations Mrs. Minnie Austen is at home, and, truth to say, she does both well.

The fearless horsemanship of Mrs.

Austen can be attributed to her early environment. Her father was Thomas Thorpe, and a shrewder dealer in horses and cattle never flourished in this land of wettest and floods. In Southern Oregon his was a name to conjure with. He had one of the largest ranches in the West, and he turned out each year some of the wildest horses and wildest cattle that were ever offered to the public for inspection and purchase. But of the horses there was a certain percentage, during his later years, that could be counted upon as being well broken, reliable and otherwise desirable.

A gentle, but firm hand, had taken from them the spirit of rebellious devilry, and had transformed demons of restless activity into tractable beasts of aid to man and amenable to his purpose. Growing up, as she did, surrounded with horses and cattle, it is not to be wondered at that the daughter of the house soon became a proficient and daring horsewoman. When she was a little tot, barely able to slip "papa," her father would place her on the back of a trusted family horse, and the small tot would then ride around the barnyard, or, joined by "daddy," would be taken on a jaunt to the nearest town.

Horses had no fear for the baby girl, and they have none for the matured woman. During her girlhood, which was largely spent on the home ranch, she became accustomed to seeing daily the cowboys breaking the wild horses. Ponies for her own use occasionally recalled bucking feats of their earlier days, and little by little she was initiated into the knack of sticking to the saddle, no matter how tempestuous the steed became.

The young woman became ambitious; she wanted to do what the men were doing, in subduing horses which had in them all the savage wildness of the wide, limitless plains. The start was gradual—at first, a horse that had been partially

broken, then a fiercer beast, until finally she attempted to break in animals that had never before known bridle or rope.

If the novice fancies that a stunt of this sort is an easy one, he should try it; but first he should make his will. For, of almost a surety, there will, in the near future, be a little green mound, covered with floral emblems, and the papers will say that another good man has gone to his reward. Of all "ornery," intractable, uncontrollable propositions in the world, the wild, untamed horse of the Western ranch is the limit, and beyond. The tiger about to spring on his victim is mild as a croquet tournament compared with a bucking, fearful bronco that feels the bit for the first time, and resents it keenly. It looks thrilling to see him bumped up, with his legs far apart and a look of eternal defiance in his eyes. It is even graceful when Remington does the picture, but don't, for a moment, delude yourself with the idea that it is pleasant to be on his back at such a time.

A Tame Comparison.

A cockle shell of a ship in an angry sea affords but a tame comparison with the antics of an untamed mustang. If the ship goes to pieces, you know that the vasty deep will give you burial, but you cannot figure your eternal resting place, with any degree of certainty, on the back of a bucking horse. One moment you feel that the end will come abruptly, with a broken neck, painless and sudden. Then you see the devilry in the eye of the beast, and you begin to understand how the missionaries feel when they receive their death sentences from the cannibals. For you can see, in your mind's eye, just where you are going to be bitten, and how you will be kicked and broken to pieces and then masticated and digested.

But let us take a glance at the woman of whom this article is written, that a

better understanding may be had of her work. The picture that you may have mentally drawn of a big, brawny Amazon, who can let out a string of oaths that would discourage and embarrass a longshoreman, is altogether wrong.

A Woman Cowboy.

Picture instead a rather frail, girlish-looking woman, of medium height, not over 5 feet 4 inches tall. In pounds she will, perhaps, weigh 125, certainly not more. A modest hesitancy in speech, and an inclination to disavow having done anything extraordinary; cool, determined gray eyes, a lithe and muscled body; a face tanned by outdoor life, with here and there a saucy freckle peeping out

from the otherwise clear, bronzed skin—and you have our heroine.

Mrs. Austen's first experience with a bucking bronco will probably furnish a story with which to regale her grandchildren, when time whitens her locks and she lives in the memories of past accomplishments, rather than future hopes. The vicious brute knew no distinction that goes ordinarily with the difference in the cut of clothes that indicate the sex. It rated all as among the common enemy who attempted to restrain his accustomed freedom, and bither his mouth with an abominable barb of steel. The girl disdained the time-honored Mexican saddle, but used the conventional

sidesaddle, and wore a gown that was fashioned after the riding habit of polite society. The beast was saddled, bridled and led to the center of a large field. Then came the pyrotechnics.

Equine Gymnastics.

In a moment the woman was in the saddle, and a firm hand was holding the reins. Rearing, kicking, plunging, the animal galloped about the big inclosure. He tried every artifice known to the equine mind, in an effort to dislodge the rider. Despite the jolting and the precariousness of her seat, the girl held on, determined and persistent.

The white flakes of foam stood out on the horse's shaggy sides, and he panted and struggled for breath. He abhorred the saddle, the girth, and, above all, the bit, and he showed unmistakably his keen displeasure. But his protests were of no avail. The plunging and rearing became less vigorous, and there was an evident desire to subside, but the girl rider would have none of it. Deep into the animal's sides she struck with her spurred heels. A furious bound, and then around and around went the beast, in a last flicker of energy, until exhausted nature refused to assist him further. His humiliation was complete. From the cayuse, with a respect for nothing human, he had come to know a mistress. Panting, smothering, yet withal a captive, submitting to the determination that had been more than equal to his own, he stood, trembling and conquered, while his rider dismounted.

Breeds Horses for a Living.

From that day to this the horse has not been brought to Mrs. Austen that she could not master. She has broken them for a living, and for her own pleasure, and the enjoyment that other women get out of such mildly exciting happenings as golf and tennis she finds in a bucking, swaying saddle that threatens momentarily to give way and send her to the ground with velocity sufficient to break her neck, if the beast she is riding succeeds in its efforts to dismount her.

An Oregonian photographer happened at the Austen home recently. A particularly vicious horse had just been sent to Mrs. Austen by the owner for her to punish, if possible, a degree of horse sense into its obstinate head. He was a particularly determined animal, with no respect for bit or whip, but bent on having his own way, though it led to the rider's destruction. Slipping on her riding habit, Mrs. Austen had the cayuse saddled, and then she proceeded to show him that, with all his devilry, it was clearly in his interest to be good. When she had subdued his wild temper, she gave him an object lesson in what a woman can do by roping him after the approved ranch fashion and throwing him to the ground, when she sat on one of his foaming sides

and gave him good advice about behaving in the future.

Mrs. Austen has been a typical cowgirl, a Diana of the plains. Her dealings with horses have not been all beer and skittles, by any means. At times she has had to put her ability in the market as a wage-earner, and it has served her well. Not so very long ago she was regularly employed by a local firm of meat-dealers to round up bunches of cattle and drive them to the city.

Hard, Rough Work.

No child's play is this difficult task. It requires pluck, determination and courage. Her companions were the roughest of cowboys, yet she was treated with a deference that could not have been more commendable, if rendered to a queen, in everyday life she was one of them, but in the thousand and one little ways in which a man can show his respect for the sex, she was reminded that they honored her as a woman, first and above all.

For several years Mrs. Austen made a comfortable income handling droves of cattle, but now she has settled down to a humdrum life, in a Portland suburb, and intends to devote the remainder of her career to fancy stunts in the sawdust ring and to breeding horses on her own place. During the Carnival her superb horsemanship was one of the most attractive amusement features offered by the management. Her tandem hurdlings feat and daring rough riding evoked in enthusiasm that found expression in tumultuous applause and approbation.

ROBERT TYLER.

THE HARVEST-TIME.

I'll picture to thee in the truest rhyme
The glories and wealth of the harvest-time,
When the fields are sheers of their fragrant hay
By the reapers who toil through the live-long day.
Then the sun shines full over forest and stream,
And the world grows brighter beneath his beam;
Then we see, in acres of waving grain,
The bread of man and his golden gain.
When the Lord his bounteous stores provides
From the emerald earth and the silvery tides,
With the flowers in blooming garlands twine
With the ripening fruit of the tree and vine—
"Tis then that all nature in harmony rings
With the fullness of joy which the harvest brings.

How serene the blue of the ocean's breast,
When the earth is crowned with the Summer's crest,
And the laden messengers swiftly sail,
By white wings wafted from shore to shore;
While the air and waters reflect, resound,
Where the notes of myriad life abound,
And the shades of twilight vanish soon,
In the golden light of the harvest moon!
It is not the Spring that has passed away,
Nor the Winter, gloomy, drear and gray—
The one an emblem of verdant youth,
The other, of death and age—in sooth,
What fills our hearts with a love sublime,
Is the beauty and wealth of the harvest-time.

ASTORIA, OREGON. W. C. HISHOP.